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PUBLIC RELATIONS

GOLD MINE

vol. 10

PROCESS WITH MICROFICHE AND PUBLISHER'S PRICES. MICRO-FICHE REPRODUCTION ONLY.

YOUR IMAGE IS SHOWING

by James Farmer

. . . and Other Articles

EA 001 854

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

GOLD MINE

vol. 10

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The articles appearing in *Public Relations Gold Mine, Volume Ten,* present an overview of ideas expressed about the many facets of school public relations during the past year. These articles, in companion with those appearing in earlier volumes of the *Public Relations Gold Mine* series, have been especially selected for their reference value to all members of the staff of an educational organization whose responsibilities include school public relations.

We are particularly indebted to the following persons for permission to include material appearing in this volume: James Farmer, professor of social welfare, Lincoln University; Claude W. Fawcett, professor of school personnel administration, University of California at Los Angeles; Carroll B. Hanson, director of the publications and information department, Seattle, Washington, Public Schools; and David E. Smoker, administrative assistant for dissemination, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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THE UNBELIEVABLE PR TRAINING GAP

At least two major studies in recent months have revealed the startling scarcity of adequate communication training provided for school administrators and for key staff public relations directors.

For instance, superintendents are neck-deep in serious problems for which they are unprepared—with internal and external communications near the top of the list—and who is giving them help? Well, scarcely anyone, including the universities, state and federal agencies, according to a report, *Issues and Problems in Contemporary Educational Administration,* by Keith Goldhammer and others of the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, published by the University of Oregon Press.

The purpose of this study, involving conferences with 47 superintendents in 22 states, was to get a first-person view of superintendent problems and to learn something about the quality of preparatory and inservice training programs for administrators. The superintendents talked with candor.

"One of the biggest problems for many superintendents is maintaining good human relations with both the organization and the community," said the study. "Many administrators admit they lack skill and confidence in their ability to deal effectively with people. They indicated that their training did not prepare them adequately in this

area. Something needs to be done in order to provide them assistance and fill in the gaps which so obviously exist."

Superintendents expressed their concern about "the public's growing lack of faith in educators," free and easy criticism by parents and mass media, demands for facts and hard proof of educational results and not "traditional glittering generalities." Lacking good means of evaluation and strong communications channels, the administrators feel helpless, said the report.

Internal communications in large and growing systems pose similar problems. Verbal and written messages become distorted in transmission. "In large districts, the superintendent doesn't even get to know all the principals or his central office staff," the report said.

With growth and lagging communications know-how, communities are being less well-informed, with the administration being forced to run greater risks of misunderstanding and loss of community support. Inner-city PR problems have become particularly baffling. Some districts have created human relations departments for face-to-face work but it is doubtful that adequate staffing is possible, the report said.

The report was sharply critical of university training quality. "Many university professors are so far removed from the level of what is going on in actual practice that what they attempt to teach is of little value," the report said. "Also, many of these professors are frustrated or unsuccessful administrators."

In addition to an overhaul of preservice education, the report called for more emphasis upon quality inservice programs. State and national professional associations should step up the quality of their publications, conferences, and conventions, said the report. The U.S. Office of Education should put some muscle behind inservice training, including the providing of funds, it said.

Superintendent M. B. Nelson, Bonham, Texas, queried 39 superintendents in four metropolitan areas, asking them to report how they spent their time on major duties. Topping the list were functions involving financial administration, coordination, and carrying out various PR and communication functions—areas in which they had received little or no training. He suggested that teaching experience is not the best way to develop the kinds of administrative skills needed today. The superintendent must be flanked with specialists in PR and other areas if he is to perform successfully, said Nelson, whose report appeared in the *Texas School Board Journal.*

THE UNIVERSITY MIRAGE

The idea that the university is the place to go to learn about school public relations and education reporting is essentially a delusion. This is the gist of *The Present State*

of Neglect, a report on a national survey of graduate school programs in educational public information made by Lindley J. Stiles, Northwestern University professor of education, for Project Public Information, an Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title V program to strengthen state department of education information programs.

Officials of 131 institutions preparing school superintendents were asked by Stiles for information; 45 did not even respond. Sixty universities said they made some effort to acquaint their students with PR. With few exceptions, the picture was one of a low level of interest and emphasis in PR.

"The inadequacy is reflected not only in the small number of programs offered but also in the designation of instructional responsibility for those programs," he reported. "Almost without exception, it is educators who teach educators about communication. Occasionally, communicators teach communicators about education. All too seldom do graduate students in one field learn about the other field from experts."

Only 21 of the 60 institutions reported specific plans for expanding PR emphases. "Schools of education favor present practices of meeting needs in this area with units in general courses in educational administration, taught by professors of education," said Stiles. Only seven institutions said they prepared school PR personnel. Interest in providing such programs was low among journalism and education colleges.

Campus indifference to the appropriateness of program offerings has a bizarre quality when contrasted with Stiles's candid pointing up of the realities of education today. There is intense hunger for education information on all sides. Fast change, growth, and complexity of educational organization and management have tended to restrict communication. Many school administrators are immobilized because of their lack of understanding about the role of information and PR. There is a critical shortage of school information personnel and fast-expanding demand.

The unreality of the university stance becomes more appalling with the awareness that those who train school administrators were fully advised more than a decade ago about the critical communication needs of educational leadership. The multimillion dollar Cooperative Program in Education Administration, financed over a five-year period by the Kellogg Foundation, exhaustively studied administrative behavior and the needs for preparation of administrative leadership. Eight regional study centers were operated. Many persons closely associated with the training of administrators were involved. Out of the research projects and studies came clear evidence that communication skills and understanding how to work with groups and individuals, inside and outside the schools, were keys to administrative success.

PROBLEMS SEEN BY THE SCHOOL PR MAN

What are the public schools' most pressing problems? The major problems of working with news media? Major obstacles in getting community involvement in school programs?

Participants in the 1967 National School Public Relations Association Seminar had the opportunity to register their views about these questions in an opinion poll conducted in advance of the Seminar by a leading PR firm, Harshe-Rotman & Druck, Inc. Kalman B. Druck, the firm's president, and Sidney Kraus, vice-president for research and education relations, discussed the findings at a general session. Those taking part in the survey included 126 of the 150 participants (71 PR directors, 16 other administrators, 6 teachers, 33 others, mostly state association PR directors).

Top problems facing the schools, in order of response, were said by the participants to be:

1. Increasing power and militancy of teachers organizations.

2. Shortage of qualified teachers.

3. Community tension caused by the school integration and open occupancy issues.

4. Low salary scale for educators.

5. Inadequate school facilities (crowded classrooms, etc.).

6. Public fear that integrated schools will provide poorer quality of education than segregated schools and also create serious social problems.

7. Difficulty of urban schools in maintaining education status of suburban and private schools.

8. Public uncertainty about the quality of public school instruction.

9. Poor image of the teaching profession.

10. Juvenile delinquency.

11. Poor communication between school officials and community.

12. Lack of public interest in the schools.

Major obstacles to effective community involvement in school programs were regarded to be:

1. Public's lack of understanding of the techniques and goals of the modern school.

2. Apathy of news media toward school events and achievements.

Considered to be no problem at all or only a slight problem in securing involvement were such factors as attitudes of teachers and administrators, lack of mutual respect between parents and educators, difficulty in getting people from different socioeconomic groups to work together, and inadequate school facilities.

Most important PR roles being assumed by the participants, in their opinion, were:

1. Justify greater financial support for schools.

2. Stimulate public interest in the schools.

3. Produce written materials for dissemination to news media, governmental bodies, and local groups.

4. Produce other material for dissemination to news media and local groups.

5. Encourage news media to devote more time and space to schools.

Interestingly, participants said they had virtually no problems in dealing with news media. They were equally divided about whether lack of depth reporting was a problem. They were extremely confident about their knowledge of news media operations and their close relationships with news media representatives. Reporters' lack of understanding of educational methods and goals was regarded to be a minor problem. Keeping news media informed about latest school developments was not viewed as a problem.

THE SCHOOL FINANCE STORY

Although James B. Conant, in his studies of U.S. education, has never evidenced much sensitivity about the role of effective communication in obtaining quality programs, he complains about the way poor communication has affected school financing in his book, *The Comprehensive High School,* published by McGraw-Hill.

Conant said he believes one of the main reasons for the "chaotic state" of school financing is that no one has ever given a clear picture of the situation. "Judging from my many talks to lay audiences in recent years and many conversations with private citizens, I am sure not many Americans realize the almost accidental way in which public schools are financed in most states," he said. "A surprisingly small number of otherwise well-informed citizens know that in some states the local school districts receive over two thirds of the funds from the state, while in other states the figure may be as low as 6 percent."

He could have added that most school employees and school board members also are in the dark. Furthermore, none but the most superficial steps have been taken by most school systems to enlighten them about the dollar side of education.

One giant move in this direction was taken by the Albuquerque, New Mexico, schools, which staged a one-day inservice workshop for all school employees on school finance. A staff committee, named by Superintendent Robert Chisholm, proposed the project because existing internal media needed reinforcement.

In advance of the workshop, discussion and background materials were prepared. Principals were briefed at a special workshop a week

ahead of the all-employee meetings. Teachers association leaders also were briefed. The day-long workshop was kicked off with a 30-minute TV overview watched by employees at meetings in individual schools. Discussions followed. Principals were asked to relay to the central administration questions which could not be answered at the building level. It was planned that these questions would be answered during a second TV program conducted in the afternoon.

No one was prepared for the avalanche of almost 400 questions sent in by the principals. Some were handled via the telecast. The remainder had to be answered via other media. Staff and public reaction to the project was highly favorable. One newspaper columnist, concerned that the affair might be "a lobbying school," learned otherwise and reported in detail about the content of the workshop.

Superintendent Homer O. Elseroad, Montgomery County, Maryland, Schools, took special pains to report to citizens a summary of proposed operating and capital budgets "in the most intelligible manner we can" in a special issue of the newsletter, *Report to Parents.* He used such terms as "the cost of people," "the cost of furniture and equipment," etc.

School budgets arouse mixed emotions, said Elseroad, because there is a desire for both good education and prudence with tax funds. "We are confident that this conflict would be minimized if every citizen understood where his money is being spent and for what," he said. He explained the budget adoption procedure and told readers where they could review complete budget documents.

Superintendent Stuart S. Phillips, Oakland, California, polled all school employees to ask for views about which services cut back or dropped because of a financial retrenchment should be restored in case there should be a substantial increase in state school aid. There was a 62 percent response. A general pay increase was regarded to be more "urgent" than restoration of class size or any services or personnel.

Adapted from the annual W. Harold Kingsley Memorial Lecture by Claude W. Fawcett, professor of school personnel administration, University of California at Los Angeles. The Lecture was presented at the 1967 National School Public Relations Association Seminar.

NEW FORCES SHAPING PUBLIC EDUCATION

A nightmarish quality surrounds much of the conduct of public education today. The situation is like a group of friends so preoccupied with the exchange of chitchat that they have paused in the middle of a freeway oblivious to the traffic hurtling toward them.

Almost no one seems to be fully aware of the vast implications for education represented in the economic, social, and political forces now bearing down upon the public schools at tremendous speed. There has been fragmented and speculative recognition of some of these forces. Too little attention has been given to their combined impact. Certainly part of the problem is that we in education have never before been confronted with a like situation.

An important clue was offered by Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California, in the May 15, 1967, issue of *Look* magazine, when he pointed out that we have moved to a culture best described as a "meritocracy." In a meritocracy, position, prestige, and rewards go to those who can perform. Performance is dependent upon education which now changes from a "servant of the public" to the "master of the public."

In fulfilling a role of master, many changes in education from kindergarten through the Ph.D. are taking place. In our political tradition the public wants to participate, and is participating, in decisions concerning the many adaptations that are being made. The participation can be orderly, providing dissent within common purpose. Or it can be disorderly through vigilante groups and revolution.

Whether it is orderly or disorderly may very well be determined by the extent to which we can redefine and reorient school-community relations officers and information programs to provide the kind of communications essential to orderly government and spontaneous, reasoned employee response to educational policies.

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS

The difficulty of securing orderly dissent within common purpose is

underlined in an examination of some of the pressing communications problems that beset public education. Public schools are forced to compete with other local, state, and national governments for scarce tax dollars. Growing national demands for new educational accomplishments force constant reevaluation of educational goals and activities. Growing metropolitan school districts force development of more sophisticated communication systems. Urbanization has provided the central city with new populations more difficult to educate.

National business activity has provided a shifting, moving population. Greater mechanization has moved the uneducated workman out of the labor force. Political democracy has provided a climate for the growth of organizational democracy leading to employee associations and collective negotiations.

As each new cultural problem has forced itself upon our attention, change has become imperative and its obvious necessity has forced attention to the participation of the public in educational deliberations. A brief examination of each problem is instructive in assessing the dimensions of the educational communication problem.

COMPETITION FOR TAX INCOME

New activities in government at all levels have forced the public schools into fierce competition for the tax dollar. The schools are forced to compete with needs for highways, welfare, city government, national defense, and public works. The need for a firehouse, a city park, or a freeway is a visible, tangible entity; the long-range need for a responsible citizen is much less obvious.

The competition between the tangible and the intangible is difficult enough even if we were not in a period of great tax difficulty. According to the U.S. Statistical Abstract of 1966, in the 15 years between 1950 and 1965 the gross national product more than doubled from $284.8 billion to $676.3 billion. Federal receipts in national income accounts almost tripled from $42 billion to $119.6 billion. The federal debt rose almost one fourth from $257.4 to $317.3 billion. State and local government income more than tripled from $23.1 to $77.1 billion. State and local government debt more than quadrupled from $24.1 to $99.5 billion. Congress is faced with raising the federal debt limit; the federal deficit for the fiscal year 1967 is estimated to be $13.5 billion.

The growing size of federal, state, and local debt and taxation suggests that tax moneys are scarce indeed. The tripling of state and local taxes and the quadrupling of state and local borrowing, prime sources of support for educational programs, suggest that they are particularly scarce at the governmental level most significant for education. In competition for scarce state and lo-

cal moneys in 1965, public schools secured a little less than a third of all general expenditures, $22.4 of $75 billion. Federal expenditures for education were only 1.6 percent of the total administrative budget expenditures of $96.5 billion.

If the public school share of federal, state, and local income is to increase proportionately, it will be the result of a communication program securing public conviction that the investment in a long-range, intangible, educational end is more important than investment in a visible, tangible object or service. *The development of such a communication program is the responsibility of the school-community relations or information officer.*

CHANGING EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Another pressing public school communication problem is a product of the introduction of at least three new public purposes for education by the federal government. The National Defense Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the various economic opportunity acts have introduced new national educational goals for education. These are: (1) *national defense,* (2) *economic growth,* and (3) *societal change.*

The old persistent goals of appreciation of right and wrong, citizenship, and social mobility have guided our curriculum planning, finance, and instructional activity so long that the new programs have had grave difficulty penetrating the operational processes of our public schools.

The federal government's policy of providing funds for its new purposes only through categorical aids has fostered the belief that these new programs are impermanent and something added to an already adequate program of education.

The public approves of these new national goals and expects they will become integrated into the conduct of public schools. The stage is set for major controversy. The controversy will be stronger because the new national goals are in the spirit of "meritocracy." They provide specific ends that are to be accomplished. Specific ends require specific planning.

In 1930 there were 69 million people living in metropolitan areas and 54 million in rural communities. In 1960 there were 125.2 million in metropolitan areas and 54 million in rural communities. In the decade between 1950 and 1960 white populations in central cities increased from 42 to 47.6 million. Nonwhite populations increased from 6.3 to 10.3 million. White populations in urban fringe areas almost doubled from 19.8 to 36.1 million. Nonwhite populations in fringe areas increased from 1 to 1.7 million. There are 25 cities of more than 100,000 population in which the density of population is more than 10,000 per square mile.

These conditions clearly make impossible any major reliance upon

face-to-face, informal communications about education among people known to each other.

Big size produces diversity of populations and opinions concerning role and function of schools. Big size produces bureaucracy, which forces urban populations to lose their educational identity and sense of cooperative participation in public education.

It is the function of the school information officer and program to provide the conditions under which a community of understanding among diverse opinion is so strong that there is identification with school purpose and an understanding of the manner in which orderly dissent within common purpose can lead to a balance of achievement.

Schools must indeed become goal-seeking, planned organizations. Sequences of instruction will have to cover the entire 13 or more years of public instruction. Teachers will have to develop specific skills, attitudes, and knowledge known to be essential for accomplishing planned and specified changes in the behavior of students. Program budgeting will be needed to relate specific costs to desired results. The public school will have to become a rational organization.

The public will necessarily expect to develop confidence in its capability to produce desired results. *This task of developing public confidence is the responsibility of the school information officer.*

METROPOLITANIZATION OF EDUCATION

Increased size of school districts produces major problems of communications. The relatively rural school district with a stable population carried on its communication through multiple, face-to-face discussions by people relatively well-known to each other. This kind of school district is rare indeed these days. According to the U.S. Statistical Abstract of 1966 there were 127,422 school districts in the United States in 1932, and only 34,768 in 1962. This decrease in numbers occurred while enrollments were growing from 26.3 to 44.5 million students.

SHIFTING POPULATION

Achievement of a community of understanding among diverse populations becomes increasingly difficult in our population because of constant shifts in residence. The U.S. Statistical Abstract of 1966 shows that more than one of five persons in the United States changed residences from April 1, 1964, to March 31, 1965—37.9 of 188 million. Of these, 25.1 million changed residences within the same county; 6.6 million changed residences within the same state but to a different county; and 6.1 million moved from one state to another.

Each new resident moving into a school district brings with him his experience from another school district. He tends to view the problems of his new educational or-

ganization with the old prejudices, habitual reactions, and procedures of cooperation gained within another organization. If he is to become an effective, cooperative, contributing member of the new organization, he must be provided an opportunity to carry on a full dialogue concerning purpose, procedures, and values within the new school district.

Frequent moves are common among employees of national corporations. These individuals constitute a highly vocal, well-educated group within any school district. They constitute an unstable, but highly effective leadership group often ignored in school administration. All movers are, however, important to any school district. *It is the responsibility of the school community relations or information staff director to provide the conditions under which orientation to the school district is quick, complete, and accurate.* Each new resident should be invited to participate in the development of a community of interest to achieve educational justice.

MODIFICATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The more clearly defined educational communications problems mentioned are accompanied by different communication problems that are the result of slow and inexorable cultural changes. An example of cultural change requiring increased communications is the disappearance of occupations calling for little or no educational background. The U.S. Statistical Abstract for 1966 points out that the labor force increased from 59.6 to 72 million in the period from 1950 to 1966. During that period white collar occupations increased from 22.4 to 33 million.

Accompanying these changes in the labor force was a phenomenal increase in the numbers of college enrollments. In 1950, 8.3 percent of 20-year-olds were in college; in 1966 the proportion was 23.5 percent. In 1950, the proportion of 18-year-olds in college was 21.2 percent; in 1966 the proportion was 50.6 percent.

This is a period of significant cultural change requiring constant reexamination of instructional goals. The public school system can survive only to the extent it is sensitive to changes which occur. The first classic responsibility in public relations is to find out what is to be done. *In a period of rapid change the school information director is required to establish the communication system sensitive enough to detect changes in purpose soon enough for the generation in school to respond while it is in school.*

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

If it is true that the first task in communications is to find out what is to be done, then the second is to get it done. The work of schools is done by the people who teach and others who are given assignments

supplemental to their work. This means that organizational communications must provide the opportunity for complete dialogue so the cooperative effort of all employees is possible. Since the information or school community relations officer is deeply involved in the dialogue with the public, he cannot fail to be the center of the organizational communication.

In this era of organizational communication, some special requirements are present. These are described by Professor Joseph W. Garbarino of the University of California at Berkeley, as follows:

"Perhaps the most important characteristic of the 1980 industrial relations system is that group bargaining will be much more pervasive than it now is. Administrative and managerial authority will be limited in all types of organizations. The 'consent of the governed' principle will be extended to employer-employee relations and bargaining out of decisions will be generalized over most of our organizations.

"Operation of this employee relations system will require a high degree of administrative skill and these skills will be in short supply. Successful industrial democracy, like successful political democracy, requires that both governed and governors work at their job." [1]

Garbarino's statement is correctly descriptive of the organizational climate of our times. It applies equally to educational and industrial employees. Governmental employees, however, have special problems in this process, and they offer major challenges in communications. Donald Wollett, chairman of the American Bar Association committee on laws relating to government employment, identifies the special problems as follows:

1. A governmental employee association has grave difficulty in securing a firm commitment from a public official who is bound by actions of elected representatives who may themselves be recalled or defeated in the next election because of an unpopular decision.

2. Insistence by public employees on benefits or changes in working conditions when income may be fixed by legal restrictions causes employee associations to communicate an apparent willingness to place selfish considerations over public good.

3. The eventual resolution of the apparent impasse caused by these two conditions seems not to rest in legal procedures, but in the acceptance by employee associations of the responsibility to develop a complete communications system in terms of the public interest as it is supported or defeated by current personnel procedures.[2]

If the analyses of Garbarino and Wollett are correct, it is possible that the school information officer may soon be faced with a competing public communication system conducted by the employee association, and it will make every effort to demonstrate a zeal for the public

weal in excess of that demonstrated by elected and appointed officials of the school district.

In response, the school information officer will be required to institute and maintain an organizational communication system complete and free enough to encourage full communication with each employee, and a public information program providing full community participation in the activities of the school district.

In responding to these challenges to school communication problems, *the information director will need to assume a central administrative role in the development of the language of organizational communication, in developing an external communications program, and in developing an internal communications network.*

THE LANGUAGE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

An educational organization, like any other organization, has a language which is peculiar to its own objectives and ways of doing things. If full participation in communication is desired from employees and the public, the details of the organizational language must be made clear. These involve not only a clear presentation of the criteria by which decisions are made, the tasks accepted by the organization, the courses of action chosen to carry on its work, and the assignments to individuals within the organization, but also the standard practices by which each course of action is implemented, the cost of procedures adopted, and progress achieved in reaching desired ends. If these organizational dimensions are not clear to employees and the public alike, communication about school problems becomes an endless morass of double-talk, frustrating all participants.

The most common response of school districts today for the need of decision criteria is to write a "philosophy" which is neither a philosophy nor a guide to decision-making. More often than not it is a quotation lifted from the writing of some college professor, or a choice bit of prose from the publications of another school district. Always the easiest things on which to secure public agreement, the criteria should be stated as guides to educational decisions. Following are some examples of criteria:

1. Educational justice demands that each child in the school district receive educational opportunity to the maximum extent possible from the support received.

2. Educational taxation will be imposed in the light of the total impact on the taxpayer of local, state, and national taxes.

3. The district will provide complete opportunity for community and organizational democracy in the conduct of its governmental and organizational affairs.

4. Precise educational tasks will be accepted by the school district

and it will organize itself to accomplish those tasks.

5. Progress reports will faithfully communicate not only to employees but to the public the precise progress made in performing the work it has agreed to do.

These and many others need to be established by the consultative procedures at hand in both internal and external communications programs. Whatever the processes of consultation, the end result should be common agreement among employees and among the public that these represent the best ways of making decisions about the school system.

Organizational language requires a knowledge of decisions that have been made. Tasks accepted by the district must be known. Courses of action designed to do the work implied by task acceptance must be clear. These two items are often included in documents entitled policy manuals. The only difficulty with current policy manuals is that they are so filled with standard operating procedures that the most important items of task acceptance and chosen courses of action are hidden among the verbiage.

The statement of tasks accepted should be no vague generalization. Since they are the precise educational intent of the organization, they should be specific enough to give precise guidance to organizational operation. If a district is going to accept the task of teaching complete reading skills to its ablest students, for example, then it should specify the 25 to 30 different patterns of skill it intends to develop over the 13 years of its contact with the student. It should also specify its chosen course of action in developing those skills. If it has chosen to require the teaching of reading in each different kind of classroom over 13 years of school experience, then this should be stated.

Policy in this sense is no statement of an intention to do good; it is a statement of intent to perform —and the manner in which the intent is to be built into the operational sequences of the organization.

Both the employee and the public in school government need to know how the courses of action are to be implemented by standard procedures. We have commonly provided employees and the public with standard practices in connection with business affairs, employee benefits, supplies, and purchasing. They have not normally been available in the instructional realm because of some vague concept of academic freedom. Now we need to develop standard procedures not only in the instructional realm but also in the administrative arena. These should be flexible to encourage creativity on the part of the staff, but complete enough to give the public and the employees confidence in the ability of the organization to reach desired ends.

Good internal communications makes it necessary not only that

each employee in the organization knows precisely what the institution is trying to accomplish, but his precise contribution to the cooperative effort, and the precise contributions of others. Only a complete understanding of this will provide the framework for building his confidence in his own work and in the work of others. The public needs to know this information to be reassured that the district has a chance to accomplish its stated ends.

Most often ignored in this communication process is the responsibility assigned to administrators and the nonteaching staff. This oversight has given rise to many attacks upon administrators and some deplorable personnel management among nonteaching employees. The end of communication in assignments is clear; the manner in which it is to be done is not. Assignments to different divisions of the organization is a start. Assignments to different kinds of workmen is helpful. Complete information about assignments to individuals in a division made available to every other person in the division is possible. We need to be creative in experimenting with ways to accomplish our ends of securing confidence in the working capability of a staff of an educational organization.

The language of organizational communication requires precise, periodic reporting concerning successes in reaching stated ends. Our practice in the past has been to report median scores on achievement tests or the number of outstanding students attending prestigious collegiate institutions, or to deplore the number of dropouts. We need to report performance in terms of specific ends sought. An example of our failure in this respect is found in the sale of 1.5 million copies of *Why Johnny Can't Read*. We had been reporting for years our steady progress in developing the teaching of reading to different kinds of students. We failed to note to the public that our progress in teaching of reading was proceeding in an arithmetical progression; the ability of the society to consume people with reading skill was progressing in a geometrical ratio. Finally, the disparity between our accomplishment and the demand of the society provided a ready market for the book and a national educational crisis. Out of the crisis came money for research which could have been available years before if we had been completely candid about the problem.

We may very well be in the same untenable position in connection with citizenship, economic participation, and acceptance of social responsibility if we don't soon learn to report successes and failures faithfully.

We also must learn to connect cost with stated intent. The tools for this kind of reporting are now available in the form of programmed budgeting. The techniques are available. Our problem is necessarily precise statements of tasks accepted. Until this is done, alternate costs of

different courses of action cannot be estimated. Alternate costs of different procedures cannot be calculated. Alternate economic costs of different goals cannot be made clear. We can no longer present budget reports for decision that are stated in comparative terms of expenditures of other years, or other districts, or other governments. We must provide the precise cost information so that decisions can be made in terms of choices of ends to be achieved.

The school information officer occupies a strange role in relation to the language of the organization. He is at the same time the conservator of the language because he is responsible for the documents in which decisions are recorded and made available to the employees and the public; and he is the conscience of the process in that he must provide leadership to the entire organization in causing the decisions to be made that provide the language for communication. As a conscience, he occupies a strategic central administrative role in the organization.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The administrative role of the information director is well known in preparing publications, in maintaining working relations with representatives of mass media, in conducting community opinion surveys, in developing community educational leadership through advisory committees, in conducting bond and operating tax campaigns, and in supervising the staff in his own office. Not so well known and recognized are his administrative responsibilities in providing leadership to the entire staff and community in public relations.

The leadership role requires him to plan for and secure the acceptance of the task of achieving democratic public participation in school decisions. In doing so he will need to secure acceptance of the goals of the communication program; define the responsibilities of each person in the organization and in the community in the process; evaluate, encourage, and develop capacities for participation; constantly remind all parties of the decisions that need to be made; evaluate and innovate in the program to keep it operating as designed; maintain records essential for making experience effective in redirecting the program; coordinate the school communications program with other community programs also dealing with educational problems; maintain complete information about the program among participants in it; develop personal satisfaction about communication activities by those who participate in them; and maintain a coordinated work schedule for participants so that no aspect of the communication is over- or under-emphasized. These are central administrative responsibilities once handled by superintendents of schools exclusively. Now, even though communication is

always a central part of the training of superintendents, chief administrators seldom are able to find the working time for this process.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

As the administrator in charge of publications, the school information director is immediately involved in internal communications. As the specialist in communications, he is required to perform the same planning, evaluating, training, and coordinating functions with internal communication that he performs in the external communications program. In performing these activities in internal communications, he will, however, encounter some unusual problems.

Unique among these is the necessity that he participate in the establishment of a rationale for administration that involves mutual respect and confidence. This means selection by management of personnel to "fit" the working group of the organization. It means the organizational adoption of a personnel system that provides ample opportunity for employee self-direction in mastering more difficult skills, rarer attitudes, and more complete use of knowledge. It means the development of collegiality among administrators and employees based on mutual confidence in accomplishment in the organization. It means organizational design of work assignments related to capabilities and changes of assignment as capabilities change. It means organizational justice in compensation.

If these conditions do not exist, the administrator becomes a poor channel for internal communication. These characteristics of administration mean the adoption of a style of management not too common in public schools.

Other unique problems consist of opening up alternate feedback channels for employee communication through suggestion systems, grievance procedures, improvement of group meetings so communication takes place, committee procedures, communicative evaluation interviews, and employee opinion polls.

The most difficult administrative problem for the school information officer is work with the employee association. In addition to keeping association officials informed, helping them with association publications, and securing formal feedback from them periodically, the information officer must participate intensively in the collective bargaining process.

The significance of collective bargaining is less the threat of sanctions or strike than it is the intensive communication of the employee association with the public. Since each employee association, like every other organization, has its own communication rationale, intensive communication tends to put the employee association's meaning on all questions under discussion. In the school district interest, it is imperative that the information director, being in charge of school district

communications, be directly involved in all collective bargaining procedures so that the district can present forcefully and timely its way of looking at the problems under discussion.

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this new role to education can hardly be underestimated. Local government of schools is at stake. The school board started out as a committee of the town meeting. It has always depended upon a complete communication system for its very existence. Now that informal communication is impossible in large districts, their very existence may depend upon the skill with which a more formal and complete communication system is developed.

Not much time is available because we are in a period of history in which we are seriously evaluating the relative responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in education. The one man one vote reapportionment has given ready access to state legislators. In urban communities the state or federal legislator is often more accessible than the local school board member. In Los Angeles, for example, there are now seven city school board members, 17 state assemblymen, and 15½ state senators. There also are more congressmen than school board members in the Los Angeles City School District. If we are prudent and swift, we may give the local school district a fighting chance for survival.

Garbarino was right in declaring that this is the era of organizational democracy. We are going to have employee associations—strong employee associations. We are going to enter into collective bargaining with them concerning wages, working conditions, and benefits. Discussions between educational governments and employee associations will either be constructive dissent within common purposes, or they will be vigorous controversy under divergent purposes. If they are to be the former, it will be because we have been able to develop an internal communications system adequate to the enlistment of the hopes and desires of individual employees in the goal-seeking activities of the district.

We stand at a decision point concerning the future. The leadership role in communications, unless it is exercised promptly, skillfully, and vigorously in school districts all across the nation, may someday be regarded by historians to be the difference between what public education was and what it might have been.

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1 Garbarino, Joseph W. "The Industrial Relations System." *Prospective Changes in Society by 1980.* (Edited by Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan.) Denver, Colo.: Project Office, 1362 Lincoln St., 1966. Chapter 9, pp. 153-72.

2 Wollett, Donald W. "The Public Employee at the Bargaining Table; Promise or Illusion?" *Journal of the College and University Personnel Association* 17: 20-27, February 1966.

BEHIND THE DECISIONS

You've seen the types—the guy who grabs the new idea and runs, the fellow who insists on a respected person's approval before acting, and the one who swears he'll never change, no matter what. These kinds of individuals and others were the subject of a fascinating presentation at the 1967 National School Public Relations Association Seminar by two Iowa State University sociologists, George M. Beal and Joe M. Bohlen. They discussed major research findings about how decisions are made to adopt agricultural innovations. Although this type of decision, they said, was usually made on an individual basis and much easier to diagnose than "social system decision-making" as in .the case of a bond issue vote or institutional innovation, there appeared to be interesting parallels.

Six major "adoption groups" have been identified. For example, said Beal and Bohlen, there is one small group of "innovators" (who make up only 2½ percent of the farm spectrum) which makes the earliest decision to try a new agricultural product or procedure. They have a high degree of awareness; they depend upon universities, agricultural agencies, and other far-flung sources of information. They make decisions to try without any local consultation; they are unconcerned about what neighbors might think of their decisions.

"Early adopters," constituting about 13½ percent of the total, reported the researchers, have their own characteristics. They tend to be younger than average, better educated, heavy subscribers to magazines and government bulletins, and are likely to be neighborhood or formal leaders like church trustees, school board members, etc. Unlike other groups, the "innovators" and "early adopters" both appear to have a high degree of ability to deal with abstractions. Said Bohlen: "They are able to look at the world through different windows from those who cannot relate on the basis of word symbols alone and must have sensory experience."

Other groups, the "early majority" (17½ percent) and "majority" (51 percent) are much less secure in their decision-making. They look to opinion leaders and for considerably more assurance about what the innovation can do to provide personal benefits and how it functions. The "laggards" and "nonadopters" completed the groups identified.

PLAYING WITH POVERTY DYNAMITE

When educators and school boards try to improve education in poverty areas without taking heed of the tremendous communication requirements involved, they actually may be stimulating community tensions and frustrations. This is the warning contained in a survey report presented to the California State Board of Education.

In a sense it was a "front line" warning, because the conclusion was based upon the views of 250 teachers, teacher aides, and administrators who work in poverty neighborhoods in 14 California cities. The study, known as Project SEAR (a Systematic Effort to Analyze Results), was carried out jointly by the office of Wilson C. Riles, director of compensatory education for the California Department of Education, and the Lockheed Missiles & Space Company. The company donated its part of the study and employed an aerospace type of systems analysis in getting the information. The objective was to explore the impact of compensatory education projects in key locations and to secure extensive information feedback from those involved in the projects.

Although schools offer a promising vehicle for the improvement of neighborhood stability and have the potential for exerting a much stronger force, present efforts can have a backlash effect unless far more attention is given to effective communication and school-community relations, SEAR concluded.

At the top of the list of essentials now required to put schools on the positive side, according to those sur-

veyed, is a two-phase operation aimed at raising the competence and public relations levels of staff personnel and moving forward on a broad school-community program of improved communications.

"The overriding indicator was the cry for increased, more effective communication between school and community," said SEAR. "The lack of visibility into the school program and accompanying gap in understanding the needs of the community is so great that it is difficult to assess the damage caused by it or the requirements for correcting the situation."

First, much more attention needs to be given to teachers working in poverty areas. Often they are inexperienced. They are uninformed and poorly prepared to handle parent and community relations responsibilities. Upgraded internal communications and inservice work to improve staff sensitivity and skills were seen as vital. "Before there can be effective communications there must be the ability to communicate—the ability to understand the feelings and problems of neighborhood residents and to relate these elements to school activities," said the SEAR report.

A key to far stronger school-community ties was offered in the report's recommendation that the school broaden its role. "The school can be a liaison—a catalyst—to identify and communicate the needs of the poverty neighborhood to the community at large," the report said. "As environmental conditions and problems of the neighborhood affect the school's ability to carry out its educational functions, so the school must work with other agencies in a coordinated effort to correct the factors that impede learning. The school, because of its continuing contact with neighborhood youth, is viewed as a central location where residents can seek assistance in finding solutions to their problems."

Strong endorsement was given to PR strategies which result in the involvement of parents and nonparents in projects aimed at neighborhood improvement as well as the education of children. Increased parent participation in schools and home visits by teachers and teacher aides have already helped break down many school-home barriers, SEAR was advised. But genuine achievement may hinge upon whether the schools will assume the role of focal point for improvement in impacted urban areas.

Adapted from an address by James Farmer, professor of social welfare, Lincoln University. The address was presented in Washington, D. C., at a special seminar exploring "The Role of School-Community Relations in Improving the Education of the Disadvantaged." The Seminar was sponsored by the National School Public Relations Association.

YOUR IMAGE IS SHOWING

In order to understand the public relations dilemma which institutions in our society face today, including the schools, we have to understand something about the ferment that is taking place in the ghetto. We have to understand how people who live in ghetto communities see the schools, how they perceive of their schools in their community and elsewhere in the city. We have to understand how they see themselves, what kind of debates and dialogues are taking place.

Today there is a great debate taking place within the ghetto community—the deprived people's community, especially the minority deprived. The issues that are being debated today within the ghetto community, and which will determine the direction which the movement will take in the future, are being debated among students in their classes—those classes where they can speak freely—at Lincoln University and, I am sure, at Howard University. The issues are also

being debated on the street corners, in the pool halls, and in the gin joints of the ghetto community.

The question of the debate in the ghetto community is: What does it mean to be black and American? That may sound like a meaningless question, but I think the answer to that question is what the ghetto community is searching for. And the answer will determine the attitude of the minority poor toward all of their environment.

The Negro, of course, *is* an American, in spite of the fact that there are some in the ghetto community who insist he is not. Those who hold this view are not isolated; they represent other groups of persons who think similarly. The late Malcolm X, for instance, insisted the black man is not an American and shouldn't call himself that. In a debate once, with a Negro opponent, Malcolm said, "Why do you call yourself an American?" The answer was, "Because I was born in this country." Malcolm grinned and asked, "If a cat has kittens in the oven, does that make them biscuits?"

Obviously the fact that the Negro was born in this country is not the only thing which makes him an American. The fact is that his subculture which has developed—and in many cases he has not even been aware of it—has been his indigenously, and it has grown out of his experiences in this country. That indeed, has made him an American.

In addition to being an American, he is also Negro. And that sets him apart. The debate that is taking place is running along these lines: What does integration mean? In my view, integration of schools is still valid, although there are many who do not share that view. A greater emphasis within the ghetto community now is on getting the highest quality schools for their children. This is part and parcel of the burgeoning attempt within the ghetto community of people to find an identity, to find out who they are, and to answer that question: "What does it mean to be black and American?"

Things today are changing so fast that what seems meaningful and relevant this week, one month later may, as a tactic, have to be changed in order to meet the rapidly changing thinking, desires, aspirations, and developments within the minority communities. Now there are some who say—and I see this as a swing of the pendulum following that first swing of the pendulum after the Supreme Court decision of 1954, "We don't want integration; what we want is separation. Give us our own schools." I see this swing of the pendulum at least as unrealistic as the first swing.

Integration is valid, and we must achieve as much of it as we can. In some cities, such as Washington, D. C., where minorities make up 90 percent of the school population, complete desegregation of the schools is impossible; there are not enough whites to integrate within the school system itself. But we

must continue trying to achieve as much of it as we can. At the same time, the emphasis today, in order to be relevant, should be upon the highest possible quality of education in schools in the minority communities. I think that the highest possible quality education in those schools involves participation of the community—full participation.

I believe that the minority poor, Negroes specifically, will not become active or involved in the schools until they see the schools becoming involved in the community, facing the problems of the community, and endeavoring to deal with, to cope with, and to solve some of the community problems.

Up until quite recently, there was almost total apathy about the schools among the black poor in the cities. There was apathy and a great deal of fear. The fear was based upon the assumption that the schools were part of the "establishment" and a part of the "officialdom." Many people who have migrated to Northern cities from towns, rural areas, or cities in the South have seen officialdom as a terrifying or frightening thing because officialdom has often been used as a vehicle for further exploitation and to preserve the status quo which has been antagonistic and hostile to them. So, many persons have in the past, fewer today but still a significant number, considered the schools to be part of an officialdom and that officialdom to be frightening. They have experienced the terror of filling out forms, the terror of visitation in the home by someone who represents officialdom. Often they didn't know what the form meant, and the words that were uttered sounded terrifying because the person who came to visit represented that awful power that resides downtown in city hall—that officialdom.

We are passing over that now, and I think one thing that has helped us to pass through it and over it is the anti-poverty program with its emphasis on maximum feasible participation of the poor. We find now that many of the poor, black poor especially, are bursting with existence, a kind of existential feeling. They are discovering that they do exist, and they are demanding to be heard. Those who have been silent in the past are no longer silent. Those who have been invisible now demand to be seen. The roads and streets have skirted and bypassed their communities. In New York, they have gone under it. In Chicago, they have gone over it. So the people remained invisible, swept under the rug.

Now they have crawled out. They are showing themselves and are speaking up—and their voices are sometimes raucous, sometimes inconsistent, often shrill. But it is the voice we will be hearing more and more. It's a voice that we must learn how to listen to and how to understand what that voice is saying. In other words, there needs to be much more dialogue between the schools and the minority commu-

nity. That dialogue is especially difficult to achieve because the minority poor communities still consider the schools to be hostile and to be adversaries, rather than to be helpers. The tendency, especially for the advanced young thinkers in the ghetto community, is to see their plight and the plight of their community as being in many ways identical to the plight of underdeveloped nations of the world—indeed, colonial nations of the world. One hears this analogy almost every day among students and among people in the ghetto communities. They see all outside forces—city hall, boards of education—as being a part of the imperializing force, the colonial power. That is the way the board of education is often viewed; that is the image it has.

The ghetto community also sees paternalism. Often what is seen is valid; sometimes it is assumed to be there when it is not. But there *is* some paternalism, and there is a strong and growing feeling that paternalism is, by definition, a handmaiden of the status quo. The point is that the people who live in the ghetto community think that they see paternalism; consequently it is something that has to be dealt with. If there is anything that poor people who have been stepped on develop, it is highly sensitive antennas, sometimes overly sensitive antennas. Sometimes the antennas pick up waves that are not there; but if the waves are there, they will be picked up, and they will be seen as a kind of paternalism.

There must be, therefore, some real efforts at greater communication between the schools and the little people in the community. One thing that could help would be to have a town meeting in the ghetto community where the board of education would go itself. Why should the board always meet downtown? The very fact that it is downtown ties it in with that establishment which, for the ghetto people in their present mood, is a hostile adversary. Let it come to the community and meet in a town meeting, preferably not in the school building because that again will tie it up with the hostile establishment. Meet at the YMCA or at some of the halls where people gather. Invite the community. I think the people will come out if they know they are going to be able to speak their piece.

Before the board and the officials go to the ghetto community, however, they should understand that it may be an extremely difficult meeting. Once again, it will be raucous. The poor people in the ghetto, the grass roots as the antipoverty movement refers to them, do not have the middle-class virtue of politeness. They will not become polite, they will make no effort to be polite. They will speak bluntly and often angrily. There will be accusations, and there will be charges and countercharges. Face it. Let them talk and raise their gripes and know that "downtown" came here "to talk to us and hear what we have to say,

so that we don't have to go on just talking to ourselves." I think today we have no choice but to confront this kind of situation in order to get dialogue in an age of polarization.

There are many other things that need to be done to change the image the schools have in the minority community. The minority families, the mothers especially, are now becoming greatly concerned about the education of their children. Years ago, that was not true, but now it is a fighting issue. The minority families see that things are not going to change unless their kids can get a better start in life, and can get a better education. They sense and believe that our schools today are not teaching the minority pupils well. I say this categorically, realizing that no generalization is completely true. But the fact is that far too many youngsters are coming out of the ghetto schools unable to read or to compute. When they graduate, they are reading at the third- and fourth-grade levels in many of our large cities. The kids get a diploma and say, "Now I've got it made; I've got my education." Then they find they are unemployed and unemployable, because they don't have the skills required.

Why is this happening? Not all the fault lies with the schools, of course. It's due also to the families, to the neighborhoods, to everything else. But it's been due in part, I think, to the fact that many parents and children do not feel that the materials used in school are relevant to them and their lives. The accusation is not new: school books with pictures of little bungalows with picket fences around them and a patch of grass in the yard. That's a house—the kind of house ghetto kids have never seen before. Thus they cannot relate to it. Also in the books the faces are all white, and it's difficult for the black kids to relate to that.

Perhaps even more important is the lack of enough ethnic information in the textbooks—Negro history, history of Puerto Rican people, Mexican-Americans, and American Indians. Either there is a lack of this information in most of the materials or a distortion of the history. This is not only true of public schools, it's true of colleges.

Perhaps using teacher aides from the ghetto community itself can take some of the nonteaching duties off the teachers. Teachers can concentrate upon doing an even better job of teaching. Furthermore, those kids can relate to those indigenous folks from their own community who can talk their language—and it's almost a different language sometimes, bilingual. I look with interest to the fact that Howard University is teaching many of its students to be bilingual: to learn the ghetto language, without which one cannot communicate, and then to learn the very different downtown language. It is important to become or to be bilingual in order to have the closest kind of communication.

Now after saying all this, I do

not attack the schools because of the failures I speak of. They are failures of all of us. They are the failures of our society, failures of those of us in the civil rights movement. They are the failures of all of us not to move rapidly enough and to understand that for people in the minority poor, ghetto community we cannot use the same techniques and methods that we have used among middle-class white children. Nor is it relevant today to seek to make those children white middle-class children. They will resist it. We must, instead, help them to encourage their own subculture, their language, their art, their dance, their music, their history. But having done this, it is not enough.

The function of the school is far greater than any of these individual things, however. The black man is not only black, he's also American. And he's also human. What is needed is for some major institution, after becoming involved in the affairs of the community and after getting the community involved in its affairs, to serve as a link in the general sense of the total community. Otherwise, blackness might become an isolated fact—and that is destructive. The white man and the black are both Americans. Together they must explore the meaning of that fact, and having found the ways to communicate, they must explore such meaning. Then perhaps they can explore deeper meanings and help the world. That is the meaning of being human.

CHANGING TIMES — FOR STAFF COMMUNICATION

Internal communications programs in school systems which seem to be inadequate may reveal outdated administrative thinking, according to Claude W. Fawcett, professor of school personnel administration, University of California at Los Angeles, who spoke at a Seminar on Internal Communications held by the National School Public Relations Association at its Center for Communication Studies at Santa Barbara, California.

Up sharply from just a few years ago is the educational level of teachers, Fawcett told participants. "The idea of a school staff composed of college graduate teachers is a relatively new thing," he said, and this means new styles of administration and requirements for internal communication. It is natural and inevitable that today's teachers want to offer ideas about the operation of the schools in which they are employed. "They will be heard. If choked off, they will go elsewhere to talk," Fawcett warned. Because school systems are the "original decentralized organization," he said, "effective internal communication bears a vital relationship to quality performance. Teaching is a lonely task. Of necessity, we must rely upon self-motivation and must offer reassurance that things done well are worth repeating."

How do you know if you have internal communications troubles? Richard W. Maxfield, director of classified personnel, Los Angeles City Schools, pointed to these signs: (1) instructions don't seem to get followed, (2) there is little evidence that instructions are read, (3) lack of respect for management, (4) numerous work postponements and interruptions because of misunderstandings, and (5) an excessive number of questions are being asked.

Like the teaching staff, the nonteaching employees also respond to recognition and good communication. "See that employees get straight answers to the questions they bring to their supervisors," Maxfield said. "If this is not done, you can be sure employees will go somewhere to get them answered."

Don't make easy assumptions about what will happen to your communications. He said notices about Los Angeles classified job openings frequently never reached classified employees via the school mail because it was assumed that secretaries would know proper routing. This problem disappeared after

notes were written to building secretaries asking for help in getting similar communications delivered to the proper persons. Help of the secretaries association also was enlisted.

THE SEARCHERS

Although the role of effective internal communication in institutional success has rarely been carefully identified or understood, some leaders are very alert to this factor and busily seek ways to solve communication problems.

"Even in a relatively small district of some 120 employees, I found it was difficult to communicate with all personnel concerning school board actions and decisions," reported Superintendent Kenton E. Stephens, Riverside, Illinois. Board meeting minutes were sent to each building, but this was not effective. Solution: a two-page summary of actions sent next day to every employee.

At Salem, Oregon, where less than half the staff has been with the system as long as five years, a special committee has been set up to find better ways of internal communication. "Perhaps some of us 'old-timers' too often assume, because periodic explanations of the responsibilities of central office staff members are made, or district policies are discussed, that everyone is 'tuned in,'" observed Superintendent Charles Schmidt. "We are finding that this is not the case."

Superintendent Robert L. Chisholm, Albuquerque, New Mexico, told administrators recently that staff and community communications have become increasingly important. "Principals especially should be responsive to persons in the community if they hope to receive the cooperation necessary to improve the schools," he said. "Principals should ask themselves, 'How do I hear my community?'"

So important is good school-community relations to successful innovating that the Suffolk County, New York, Educational Center for Supplementary Services has established an inservice course of 14 two-hour sessions for teaching personnel. The assistant to the superintendent of Hauppauge, New York, schools is the instructor.

More than 500 teachers and other Los Angeles schools employees have enrolled in an experimental inservice course in Spanish designed specifically to help improve communications between schools and parents with little or no knowledge of English.

A free "Dial for Education Information" service permits any Illinois teacher to direct dial a number at Hinsdale, Illinois, and get a taped phone report on some aspect of innovative educational practices. Material is developed by the Illinois State Department of Public Instruction and recorded by a well-known radio-TV announcer. Illinois Bell Telephone Company cooperated in development of the service.

Adapted from an address by Carroll B. Hanson, director of the publications and information department, Seattle, Washington, Public Schools. The address was presented at a conference of school administrators in Portland, Oregon, sponsored by the Oregon State Department of Education in cooperation with the Oregon Association of School Administrators.

THUS SPAKE DOSTOEVSKI!

It is important to define the relationship of the public relations director to the superintendent. Under the systems approach to administration, the public relations director is only one member of the superintendent's team. The public relations director should, as he does in most districts, report directly to the superintendent, and he should, like other team members, contribute whatever special skill he has to the solution of the many problems which beset a superintendent today.

The public relations director is not a policy maker—although he may make policy suggestions from time to time. He is not the captain of the ship. He is, by comparison, somewhat like the navigator. In other words, he does not determine the cargo, the ports of call, or the payroll of the crew. But he watches the winds, the tides, and the stars. He raises questions. He plans. He waits. Finally, he recommends to the superintendent how and when the case for the school board and the superintendent should be presented to the public and the school district employees.

There is not complete agreement, by any means, on the role of the school public relations practitioner. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) is well aware of this. A committee on standards was appointed to study this and to bring recommendations to the 1968 NSPRA Seminar in San Francisco.

What does the public relations man think about? He thinks about questions which are likely to vex the superintendent and the school board. Here is a sample list:

CHANGES IN CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODS

When we look toward tomorrow, with its social problems, political demands, and worldwide business opportunities, it is clear that tomorrow's citizen will have to be better equipped than we are in foreign languages and in the basic ability to seek out, analyze, and solve complex problems. University stu-

dents have already pushed into tomorrow's world, with consequent upheavals on many campuses over academic, moral, and social issues. High school students will not be far behind.

In telling the story of curriculum and instructional needs, public relations programs will have to be more sophisticated than in the past. Curriculum changes are difficult to dramatize because their effect, like good teaching, is almost imperceptible except over a very long period of time. There is no explosion. Rather there is slow growth, like the acorn becoming an oak.

In Seattle, right now and for some months, we have been thinking about ways of explaining the continuous progress concept and an experimental learning center.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The changing curriculum and teaching methods will force radical changes in buildings and raise questions.

For example:

"Why not multistoried instead of single?"

"Why is so much land needed?"

"Why carpeting?"

"Why swimming pools?"

"Why computers?"

"Why flexible space?"

"What is a learning center?"

These and many other questions must be answered over and over again through the public relations program.

TEACHER NEGOTIATIONS

A new kind of teaching corps will be needed to handle the new curriculum. The new teachers will be professional in every respect.

Tomorrow's teachers will operate in a greatly expanded hierarchy and salaries will be somewhat greater than they now are for the top teachers. It will not be necessary for a teacher to become an administrator merely to get a decent salary.

Negotiations will accelerate decision-making in education, with the school board members and the superintendent on one side of the table and the profession on the other.

The public must be constantly reassured that, despite negotiations, the school board is not abdicating final authority for policy making vested in it by voters and the state.

DE FACTO SEGREGATION

This is a cancer in our land. It must be removed or it will destroy democracy and turn America into a police state. How to reduce segregation and start integration is one of the most crucial questions of the day. Its solution will require the closest collaboration between school board and other governmental bodies. The public relations office can assist by issuing teacher inservice information; by pointing out that the white population has as great a stake in the solution of the problem as does the Negro; by highlighting the achievements of Negro teachers and students; by involving Negro citizens

in school affairs; by backing up a voluntary transfer program; by keeping communication channels open between the white and the Negro community.

THE EDUCATION-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

This topic deserves an entire speech. I can only touch on it here. Such a partnership is roughly comparable to our military-industrial complex, and it presents the public with this very tough question: *Shall the federal government assume the major share of financial support and policy direction for our schools?*

The answer will depend largely upon how much strength—local, state, and national—school boards can maintain and how well they can keep their constituents informed.

Following is a description of what the school board and superintendent are doing in Seattle about public relations and school support.

THE LABORATORY

As background, let me sketch in the laboratory situation. Seattle is a booming city of more than half a million people, with a public school enrollment of around 95,000, and a staff of about 6,400, operating 118 schools.

The school district has a budget of more than $70 million a year, of which about 20 percent depends on the *annual* passage of a special millage levy. The Washington state constitution requires a 60 percent majority to pass a levy, and also requires a voter turnout equal to 40 percent of the number which voted in the preceding general election.

So far as I know, the requirements for passing a levy in Seattle are the most rigorous faced in any large city of the nation.

We have been fortunate, however. Since 1957, when the annual special levy was adopted as a regular effort to finance quality education, the levy has always passed, with one exception, either the first or second time around. For instance, voters passed a $43 million bond issue in September 1966 by a 60 percent plus majority; a $15 million operating levy in January 1967 by an 84.2 percent majority; and a $17½ million operating levy in November 1967 by a 67 percent majority.

With this background in mind, it is not surprising that the public relations program in Seattle has the solid support of everybody concerned with quality education, from the school board and the superintendent to the staff in every school, as well as virtually every major organization in Seattle.

POLICY—NOT MAYBE

Nothing happens in a school public relations program unless it is a stated policy of the school board and the firm conviction of the superintendent that the public shall be informed and that the school system shall give full support to the public relations department. I cannot stress this fact too strongly.

Lacking this policy, it would be impossible to:

1. Adequately staff the department.

2. Clothe it with authority to make decisions.

3. Give direction to school employees.

4. Acquire the funds to conduct a program of publications, slide presentations, motion pictures, research, and special events.

The long-range purpose of the public relations program is to make an impact on a substantial majority of the voters in Seattle and maintain, if not increase, the normal commitment that our citizens hold toward quality education. The immediate purpose is always to pass the annual levy—that slender thread which suspends disaster.

There are three phases to the total Seattle public relations program. They are: (1) an institutional city-wide program, (2) a decentralized community relations program, (3) a levy information program.

All of the programs are planned, budgeted, and put into writing for the superintendent's approval about six months before the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Once approved, it is the responsibility of the director of the publications and information department to execute the programs outlined, with the help of staff, outside consultants, and a variety of school employees, PTA members, and other citizens.

At this time the public relations group of Seattle schools is composed of nine people, full or part-time, including a supervisor of information, a conference coordinator, the editor of the *Seattle Schools* newsletter, an artist and production manager, and five secretaries.

The central public relations staff operates in Seattle as a silent partner to the superintendent. I say silent because in education it is essential that the superintendent or school board president speak to the public on major issues. No one can substitute for them.

The central public relations staff plans, creates, services, assigns, and evaluates across the whole gamut of public relations activity.

But if its name were "Legion" it could not begin to carry out all the programs that it sets in operation.

There is some danger, not to mention inefficiency, in a public relations office trying to do more than it should. Walter Lippmann's statement in *The Good Society* is applicable. He said: "It is generally supposed that the increasing complexity of the social order requires an increasing direction from officials. My own view is, rather, that as affairs become more intricate, more extended in time and space, more involved and interrelated, overhead direction by the officials has to become simpler, less intensive, less direct, more general."

Now a word about the city-wide institutional communications program. Its main purpose is to increase support for the *school system* (as distinguished from a single, local

school) by building civic pride in the program and confidence in the school board and superintendent. It presents a concept far beyond the local do-it-yourself school; a concept which might be summed up as "Big Schools, Big Business." The focus is on the interrelationship of the schools with the total community, particularly the fact that a good school system means a better economic climate, attractive to new industries, beneficial to property values, and conducive to full employment, trained manpower, and a higher standard of living. This concept appeals strongly to industrial and labor organizations, and other city-wide organizations.

We like the line in *Look* magazine's story on Seattle's business education program. It said, "Local businessmen love Seattle's business education program."

But in order to disseminate this concept we have to report more frequently to civic organizations and citizens in general and submit our school system programs and budgets to much closer scrutiny than we ever have in the past. We expect to have tough questions asked, and the board and superintendent expect to live in the glare of publicity. Reporting to the public is routine for successful corporations. One of them reports 12 times a year to millions of stockholders at a cost of thousands of dollars.

The institutional program deals with material of a systemwide nature, such as board policy, the budget, board and administration views on state legislation, and lately, federal programs, professional negotiations, and de facto segregation. Material is sent to Seattle daily newspapers, four television stations, several magazines, a dozen radio stations, 15 weeklies, and 20 special area publications.

Researchers tell us that the usual instruments of mass communication (television, radio, the press, and magazines) cannot by themselves change opinion. It is interesting to note, also, that Walter Cronkite recently stated that "the public needs to know a great deal more than we in television can communicate to them. Somehow or other, we have to teach the American people to seek more information. . . ."

In practice, therefore, we are placing less reliance on the mass media than we used to. However, we do not discount the mass media and we welcome all the time and space we can get. But in the past several years, in Seattle, we have paid more attention to weekly newspapers, and we have built up our own supplementary communications channels which can be focused at will on special publics and can carry news which is important to the school board but not sufficiently dramatic or immediate to gain acceptance by the mass media.

We need our own channels of communication, for example, to the teaching corps and other personnel in the school system; we need our own channels to key citizens; and

we need our own channels to reach a nationwide audience of potential employees in the teacher training institutions of America. Schools need to fight much harder for their share of priceless talent.

We, therefore, send to each school home, each month, a copy of *Seattle Schools* newsletter. We also send a copy to every member of the Seattle schools staff, as well as to key citizens, and leading teacher training institutions. Our total printing each month is 80,000 copies. We send out a weekly *Guide* to the entire staff. We also prepare films and color-slide presentations on a variety of topics of public interest, such as "The Knowledge Explosion," "Business Education," and "Let's Go to Kindergarten." These are usually 20 minutes in duration. and can be booked for service clubs and lodges. The slide presentations are complete with a script and a projector. Last year we offered six different presentations, which were viewed by nearly 10,000 civic leaders. We are now planning to go further with sound and color motion pictures. This is expensive but necessary.

We also prepare news conference materials, speeches, and statements; operate a clipping service and a special photo service.

We also arrange for superintendent's luncheons with the officers of city-wide organizations. These luncheons are off-the-record. They have done a great deal to bring key leaders into intimate contact with the school system and have had the general effect of creating an atmosphere of trust as well as clear communication.

The superintendent's luncheon program this past year included the top officers of the Chamber of Commerce, the King County Labor Council, Seattle Council of Churches, the Municipal League, the Bar Association, the Telephone Company, the presidents of nearby colleges and universities, the American Institute of Architects, the League of Women Voters, and the chairmen of our Area Citizens Committees, to name a few.

We work with "mediating" groups, such as the Junior Chamber of Commerce. We have just finished our first big Fine Arts Festival with them, and the Chamber just sponsored and completed distribution of 200,000 copies of our 1967-68 *Handbook*.

We have a speaker's bureau which distributes, at the beginning of each school year, a program booklet, complete with pictures of available speakers and topics.

We are currently reviewing our organizational contacts, setting up late spring and summer citizen budget sessions.

So much for the institutional program—the city-wide effort to build understanding and a commitment.

The decentralized community relations program is based on the theory that each school must be in good shape on its communications or the whole system will suffer. In

addition, this program reaches those persons who are loyal *only* to their local school and do not comprehend the *total* school system.

We have divided Seattle into 12 areas, using the senior high school attendance boundaries, for the most part. The heart of the program centers around citizen advisory committees. We are now considering some expansion of this "grass roots" citizen involvement.

We may establish twelve *Area Citizens Advisory Committees,* each composed of about a dozen leading citizens, appointed by the school board, on nomination of the principals. Each committee would elect its own chairman and plan its own program. This would include school visits and independent study. Every other month, the 12 chairmen would have breakfast with the superintendent and school board. Since one third of the membership would change each year, a new *mediating* group would be formed each year and, hopefully, its influence would permeate the community. We would select citizens who are prominent in business and labor.

We also have a *Program and Exhibits Committee* of principals, who are busy all during the school year booking and showing color-slide presentations to the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and other service clubs and lodges in its area. We frequently have five showings a day throughout the city. In addition, this committee books youth groups into retirement homes during Christmas to sing carols and give readings.

This committee periodically sets up and services counter exhibits in such places as banks, beauty parlors, drug stores, and medical offices for such booklets as "Where the Money Goes," "A World of Learning," "Problems and Progress," and "People Are Asking."

We have a *Roster Committee* of high school principals who screen new names in the area, delete the names of persons who depart the area, and constantly keep our IBM mailing lists up to date.

The *Special Levy Committee* of principals goes into action about two months before the date of the annual levy election.

It is obvious—and important—that no one principal or committee has a very burdensome assignment. This is desirable because the public relations work of the principals comes on top of their other work. But by splitting up the program into small, manageable segments, the total job gets done and, in the opinion of many citizens, the community relations program is effective. But we are constantly evaluating it. I am certain that we can make major improvements in the future.

My own observation is that many of our principals are finding in community relations a whole new field of interest. Most of them are revealing a genuine talent for involving their communities in the school enterprise.

I would venture to predict that (1) public relations will become

part of the principal's regular responsibilities to an increasing degree, and (2) it is only a matter of time before our schools of education will offer substantial preparation on public relations to its administration majors.

At the moment, our schools of education are very weak in this field. A recent study sponsored by Project Public Information revealed that only 60 out of 131 institutions that prepare superintendents give them any courses in public information. Those that do, offer courses taught by educators and not by specialists in communication. Only seven institutions of higher learning prepare educational public information officers. In November 1967, a conference, including deans and school public relations personnel, was called at Stanford University to consider this matter. It was unanimously felt that school administrators, particularly future superintendents, should receive a solid course in public relations as an integral part of their graduate school program.

But clearly, today, it is the principal who is the key man in public relations. It is the principal who is closest to the people and who can give us the most reliable feedback.

THE LEVY PROGRAM

The levy information program is carried out by a coordinator, again a talented principal or vice-principal, who is brought in for two months immediately before the levy election. Six months prior to his arrival, a citizens committee has been established and a campaign timetable has been prepared. It is the duty of this coordinator to put the campaign into motion.

The timetable calls for a rapid, and somewhat frantic, succession of events: fund raising, briefing field workers, securing endorsements, preparing materials, and giving undivided attention to a thousand-and-one details. Endorsements are important, if only because they would be conspicuous by their absence. They are also important because researchers are finding that it is impossible to communicate with an individual in isolation from the groups to which he belongs or would like to belong. We use "mediating" groups, which finance and run their own subsidiary campaigns. We may also mount a subsidiary campaign involving all the school districts in Puget Sound area.

After the campaign, there is an analysis of the vote. There are also "thank you" letters to hundreds of individuals, particularly to PTA members, who are the real backbone of our campaign. I would consider the campaign to be a "booster shot," so to speak, to increase the effect of the year-around programs just described.

"We do not use every known campaign technique in any one campaign, because we have to have an election every year. I believe that almost any tax or bond election could be won *once* by an all-out effort. But an all-out campaign

every year would hurt us over the long pull.

THE MESSAGE

This brings me to the nature of the message that we try to communicate through all the network of organizations and contacts and through all the media at our disposal.

Facts alone are not enough. There must be an intimation of faith, hope, and pride in their association with the individual citizen. There must be an emotional ingredient as well as an appeal to reason.

The *quality* in a large city school system is so *complex* that the average voter *cannot* fully comprehend it. And he can only grasp it partially with a great deal of study and attention by reading in-depth coverage and visiting classrooms.

Only the school board and the superintendent can really have the total picture of a quality school system clearly in focus.

Therefore, the board and the administration must ask the voters to accept the stamp of approval given by key leaders who have become involved in depth in some part of the school program and have seen its quality with their own eyes.

The board and administration must ask the voter to accept the communication of isolated achievements in the school system as an adequate token of the total quality of the system.

The board must ask the voter to accept the endorsement and findings, for example, of a board-appointed citizens study committee on the budget, the integration program, or the validity of a special levy.

The public must take the board and superintendent in good faith on many issues, and this is why a much more intensive effort must be made in many school districts to acquaint the public with board members and the superintendent.

The time is upon us when the school community relations programs must create a *climate of faith* as well as a flow of fact.

The most delicate and important task of public relations is to keep the channels of communication open to both the staff and the general public. No matter how acrimonious the debates may become, no matter how tempers flare along a wide battlefront, the public relations arm of your organization must never break off diplomatic relations with either inside or outside groups. Those groups which oppose you today may join you tomorrow if the way is left open.

A quotation from Dostoevski conveys, better than I can, the general idea underlying all effective public relations programs. Dostoevski said:

"If the people around you are spiteful and callous and will not hear you, fall down before them and beg their forgiveness, for in truth you are to blame for their not wanting to hear you."

MEET THE SCHOOL SYSTEM PR MAN

The stature of public relations in U.S. school districts has reached the point that the largest are much more likely to have a full-time PR director than not. A recent survey of 198 school districts, including the big ones, revealed that 60 percent had full-time directors. An additional 18 percent had part-time directors.

The information is contained in *The Administration of PR Programs in Local School Systems, 1966-67,* published by the Educational Research Service, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

Ninety percent of the full-time directors stated that they report directly to the school superintendent. As might have been expected, the survey revealed that very few of the persons actually have a "public relations" label in their position titles even though there is a common tendency to apply the term "public relations" to almost any activity designed to interpret the school program to the community.

The survey disclosed a tremendous spread in salaries of school PR directors and coordinators in the larger districts (25,000 enrollment up)—from a top of $24,000 to a low of $6,500. Most full-time directors had staff assistance but a few said they had no help. A good many of the PR men said they were not expected to provide PR counsel. Only one half said they advised the school board. One third gave advice to the superintendent's council (although 45 percent said they held membership in such a council). About 22 percent provided advisory assistance to curriculum councils.

Adapted from an address by David E. Smoker, presently on leave from his position as public information and publications director for the Albuquerque, New Mexico, schools, to serve as administrative assistant for dissemination, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory. The address was presented at a seminar in Santa Barbara, California, on "Effective Information Dissemination of Educational Innovations," sponsored by the National School Public Relations Association.

STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF INNOVATION DISSEMINATION

The old admonition to "mind our P's and Q's" has numerous indirect and several very direct applications to the strategies of innovation dissemination.

A study of the origin of the expression revealed three explanations, each somewhat analogous to communications problems.

One explanation is that "mind your P's and Q's" was a warning given to printing apprentices as they sorted letter type back into the cases. In lower case type, it is very easy to confuse the two letters, since they are identical except for the direction of the loop. Since one major dissemination tool is the printed word, the warning to mind our P's and Q's in connection with printed materials is appropriate.

A second explanation of the expression goes back to the French dancing-masters of the time of Louis XIV. They had to teach people to bow and curtsey as part of the minuet. At that time, the wearing of large periwigs was in vogue, so one had to be careful not to bow so low as to lose the wig. Dance students, therefore, were admonished to watch both their *pieds* (their feet) and their *queues* (or wigs). This second explanation might be related, with its bowing and curtseying, to the good human relations and the face-to-face communication needed for an effective dissemination program.

Finally, the third source of the expression dates back to the English and early American public houses, or pubs. It is said that the pubkeeper would tally the evening's drinks by making marks under either a P (for pint) or Q (for quart), depending upon the size of the ale which one ordered. Thus, if one did not want to be overcharged, it paid him to mind whether the pubkeeper marked under the P or the Q.

This analogy is broad, but perhaps the most important of the three. It reminds me of bottles, and bottles remind me that there are various means of disseminating information —ranging all the way from messages in floating bottles to bouncing high

frequency signals to the other side of the earth via Telstar satellites.

It is important to explore the many shortcomings of the floating bottle method of dissemination. For one thing, it is unbelievably *slow*. For another, the bottle may never reach anyone; or it may reach someone who feels that the only fit place for floating debris is the trash can. It may drift to someone who doesn't speak the same language as the one used in the bottled message. Finally, if we are trying to reach a large number of people with our message, an awful lot of bottles are going to be wasted.

It is with a mixture of horror and sadness that public relations professionals observe large numbers of present-day educators, who claim to be educating young people to live in the twenty-first century, but who are still in the floating bottle era themselves when it comes to communicating. With no attempt whatever to identify the audiences they are trying to reach, and with no determination of the best media for reaching their audiences, they hopefully set their bottles adrift in the sea of humanity and optimistically assume that everybody is going to get the message.

There are five P's and three Q's which I think are specifically essential to strategic dissemination programs. The five P's are: planning, publics, person-to-person approaches, publications, and the press. The three Q's are: questions, quickness, and quality.

Before I elaborate on these P's and Q's, let me stress one very important point. By talking about some of the essential principles of effective dissemination, I do not mean to imply that all that needs to be done is to put the nuts and bolts together according to a diagram and the result will be instant communication. For while there is a science to communication, there is also an art. The P's and Q's are a good base upon which to build, but the real success of the dissemination program will depend, in large measure, upon the imagination, creativity, and artistry of the people who are directly responsible for producing and carrying out the program. This is *creative dissemination*. It is the *art* which undergirds *strategic* innovation dissemination.

Those of you who are responsible for dissemination related to educational innovations need all of the strategy you can muster. You face at least four big handicaps, simply because you are concerned with innovations. First, you are flying in the face of one of the major psychological barriers to communication: Human beings have an unwillingness to absorb ideas that conflict with their secure attitudes. People don't like the boat to rock. Yet those of us who are concerned with educational innovations, are deliberately trying to rock the boat.

A second severe problem is that we are disseminating information about things which are not very familiar to people. This unfamil-

iarity with the subject of your dissemination effort is another big barrier to real communication.

Third, innovative projects develop a jargon understandable only to those directly involved in the project, and the temptation is to make wide use of that clever jargon in the dissemination effort. This is a mistake. Instead, I heartily recommend a simple solution to this barrier: Use English in your dissemination.

Fourth, and hopefully this is a diminishing problem, all of us who are attempting to disseminate information about federally funded projects still face some inherent resistance and resentment about federal aid to education.

These kinds of special communication problems related to dissemination about innovations simply add emphasis, I think, to the admonition that all of us have got to mind our P's and Q's.

PLANNING

The first P on my list is *planning*. It is at once the simplest, and yet the hardest, step in developing strategic dissemination programs. Without advance planning, however, it is impossible to have an effective dissemination program. Good communication doesn't just happen. Good communication, good PR, come from careful, strategic planning and then lots of hard work.

This planning must include an analysis of what it is we are trying to do. Why disseminate? For what purpose? To whom? If we refer to the Title III guidelines, they suggest the answers to some of these questions: "To assure that educational improvements are shared and pitfalls avoided, to stimulate cooperative efforts, and to gain public support for, and understanding of, Title III activities (there's the purpose, the answer to 'why disseminate?') the educational community (there's the 'to whom?') should know about the existence of any significant innovations, creative approaches, or exemplary programs, and the public (another 'who') should be informed of activities which are being planned or operated under Title III. (And here comes another answer to 'why disseminate?') Public interest and support are not only desirable but essential to realization of the goal of phasing out federal participation in Title III projects through local funding."

Planning, then, must concern itself with what we have which needs to be disseminated, whom we must reach with our communications program, and what communication tools will best do the job at hand. And the job at hand is *not* just to give information. If local sources are to take over these innovative programs and continue them when the federal pump-priming is over, the job is to gain *acceptance* and *active support,* not just understanding.

PUBLICS

The first P—planning—also involves the other four. The second P, *publics,* is perhaps the most important consideration in planning for dissemination.

Notice that the word is plural—publics. There is no such thing as a general public which can be reached with a single communication medium. There are a lot of publics, and the most effective tool for communicating with one of them —educators, for example—may not be the same as the one for effective communication with another public —taxpayers, for example.

At this point, I cannot underline heavily enough the public which is of first priority in our planning if we want to reach any goal, and unfortunately, it is the public most often neglected in our communications effort. I am speaking of the internal public—staff members and employees, the people directly related to the center, or project, or school system. If our own members do not fully understand our goals, and if they do not fully support those goals, any attempt to win the support of external publics is almost certainly doomed from the start.

This most important segment of the public is often overlooked because we assume communication is taking place within the organization. One of the nation's leading PR men has made what I consider to be a very profound observation. He said "the great enemy of communication is the illusion of it." A newsletter is published, a staff meeting is held, and it appears that we have communicated. This is often an illusion.

Study after study shows that the top executive in any organization is often suffering from the illusion of communication within the organization. He assumes that his supervisory hierarchy provides a clear channel of vertical communication, both upward and downward, and that lateral interdepartmental communication is equally reliable. Actually, as Robert N. McMurry observed in an article in the *Harvard Business Review,* "most levels of supervision are less communication centers than communication barriers. . . . In effect, the typical chief executive is the prisoner of his position communications-wise. He is largely insulated from the everyday realities of the enterprise he leads."

In considering publics for dissemination, then, the internal public —the organization's employees— must be placed at the top of the list.

To illustrate strategic planning with regard to which publics need to be reached, and how, I am going to use one Albuquerque, New Mexico, program as an example.

After 35 years on a 6-3-3 plan for our elementary, junior high, and senior high grade levels, we began a pilot 5-3-4 program involving 12 schools. It was begun smoothly, because of a planned communication program designed to get to certain publics. The planning took place more than a year earlier.

The superintendent's cabinet, which meets every week for a free and open discussion of problems, current events, and advance planning, saw the opportunity to try a departure from the 6-3-3 plan with

the anticipated opening of a new high school in the fall of 1966. We had long wanted to try a "middle school" pilot on a 5-3-4 plan, but had not been able to do it because population growth had kept the buildings jammed to capacity. Opening of the new high school gave the room necessary to house four grade levels at both the new school and the one which it relieved, and we wanted to take advantage of this opportunity.

Immediately we recognized a big communication problem: rocking the boat on something which has been an accepted way of life for 35 years.

We identified publics, and the probable reactions of each of these publics to a proposal, and then we planned a dissemination program.

For starters, we had a clear consensus among the top administrators. All of us could see many potential advantages to getting the ninth graders out of the junior high, along with their Carnegie unit problem, and of getting the sixth graders into a middle school situation offering far more comprehensive facilities than we have in our elementary schools.

The superintendent then sounded out another public—members of the board of education—on an informal basis, and found them eager to support the pilot program.

The cabinet then discussed the other publics which needed to be reached, in what order, and through what media. We felt the key to the whole idea was an acceptance by the middle school principals and their faculties, since this level would involve the greatest departure from status quo. We agreed that if we did not have the eager commitment of this group to do the necessary preparation for such a change, we would abandon the idea.

The superintendent then talked, individually, with all junior high school principals in the feeder areas of the two high schools in question. He asked them to consider the question with their faculties, and make it clear that they were under no shadow if they or their faculties did not wish to be involved.

After several weeks of discussion, three junior high schools indicated they were willing to give it a try. We then went to work in earnest to reach all of the publics involved. The total administrative group, both central office and principals, was informed as to what was under way. One of the knottiest problems, we knew, was going to be discontinuing the interschool athletic programs at the three middle schools, with all the implications this had for displacement of coaches, disappointed ninth-grade football players, and angry parents of disappointed ninth-grade football players. The athletic director began to work with the coaches' group, and the principals began to disseminate information to parents about the proposal, stressing the advantages which they saw in the middle school approach.

Knowing that the word would

begin to spread rapidly at this point, we began to make use of the mass media. The three junior high principals prepared printed announcements to all parents in their communities, agreed on a given date to send them home with students, and the information office prepared a news release for the newspapers, radio and television stations which quoted from the parent announcements.

This first public release noted that the *possibility* of such a pilot program was under study, listed the advantages which *might* be gained from such a change, and frankly discussed some of the problems. It was designed to encourage some feedback, some reaction, from the parents and students. We got plenty: concerns about the disappearance of football, cheer leaders, etc.; fear and disappointment from ninth graders who, instead of being the top dog at Ernie Pyle Junior High, were going to be low man on the totem at Rio Grande High as freshmen; concerns from parents about sixth graders having to ride the bus all the way to the middle school instead of staying in their neighborhood; questions about what the sixth-grade instructional program would be like.

Because we already had the commitment of the three faculties, they had the answers to these concerns and could talk about the many advantages which they saw. PTA meetings and student councils served as public forums to discuss the possibilities; school newspapers began to discuss the pros and cons.

Having prepared the various publics for the next step, and having in hand some concrete proposals for the pilot instructional programs (following their development by the faculties concerned), we were ready for the next step in dissemination. We worked out the timing so that we could have the decision to implement discussed at an open board of education meeting, and then follow up quickly with our own publications, and a student press conference with the superintendent.

The board approved the pilot, and the mass media which covered the meeting carried complete stories about the approval. Editors of all 26 junior and senior high school newspapers had been invited to a press conference with the superintendent and were able to ask him and the three middle school principals for full details of the project.

Implementation itself went fairly smoothly, because a planned dissemination program, aimed at all of the publics involved and using all of the communication tools at hand, had gained acceptance of the project.

In addition to this example of strategic planning and the identification of publics, I would like to refer to a growing body of research which may help in the effort to reach specific publics. One extensive study entitled, "The Structure and Process of School-Community Relations," conducted at Stanford University under the direction of Richard Carter and William Odell, provides

some preliminary conclusions such as the following:

How would you like information about the kinds of people who are receptive to innovations? According to the Stanford research, here are some groups who like educational innovations: (1) parents of children who attend private schools, (2) to a lesser degree, parents of children who attend public schools, (3) persons with strong satisfaction in the education they received, and (4) *some* of the people with higher educational achievement, although the remainder of the highly educated group strongly dislikes educational innovation.

How would you like to know which communication media are effective with each of these groups? The Stanford study indicates conclusions such as these: (1) of all the agencies available for aiding citizens in learning what is happening in schools, only the newspaper is seen as helpful by as many as half of the people interviewed, (2) citizens who are financially hard pressed make especially high use of radio and television, (3) parents of post-school children are uninterested in schools generally, and appear not to be reached on school matters through any presently utilized medium.

Who is likely to support innovative projects with local resources? Some of the preliminary conclusions in this study show that the higher educated person favors stimulus funds to improve future public education, but that he prefers local sources for increased funds; that the less educated person prefers national sources for increased funds for public education; that persons satisfied with their own educations prefer state funds for schools; and that those dissatisfied with their own educations favor federal funds for schools.

This is just a sampling, but it is indicative of the kinds of research available in ever-increasing amounts which *may* help those engaged in the dissemination process. I emphasize *may* help us because, despite some helpful conclusions, Carter and Odell also observe that "we are not likely to be able to prescribe any one communication technique which would be necessary and sufficient to achieve influence in any given situation."

THREE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The next three P's in strategic dissemination are symbolized by these communication tools: person-to-person approaches, the press, and publications.

With regard to person-to-person approaches, the rule of thumb is that these are the most effective kinds of communication tools. To oversimplify, and state that our purpose in dissemination is basically to get acceptance and support of innovations in education, I think person-to-person approaches take on even more significance. Unless I have read the wrong things, and been completely blind during my entire career as a communicator,

there is only one way to motivate people to support innovation: They must be involved directly in it, either in planning, implementing, or intensive visitation opportunities. People do not become committed to change as the result of reading a newspaper, or looking at a brochure, or being given a report. These can stimulate interest, arouse curiosity, and inform people about the innovation; but it takes personal involvement to motivate people toward commitments to change.

What about the press? The strategy we use in Albuquerque in our relations with the news media is based upon, chiefly, the desire to provide them with the best possible service we can. Our relationship with the news media is based on mutual trust, a trust which has been *earned* by *both* participants over a long period of time. They expect us to keep them informed of all the news—good *and* bad—while it is still news, and in a form that they can use. We, in return, expect them to exercise judgment and ethics in the use of this information. What kind of service will they get from us? They'll get daily, personal contact from the schools information office. They'll get news releases written in their styles, as far ahead of their deadlines as we can get them. They'll get as even a break as we can provide on major stories. They'll get tips on feature stories which will net an aggressive reporter a byline (and net us front-page space which we wouldn't get if we wrote it ourselves). They will get complete agenda of our board meetings three days ahead of time and a press conference with the superintendent an hour before the meeting. If they have another hour's worth of questions after the meeting, they will have someone on hand to tell them what they want to know. They'll get invitations to every open house, science fair, special tour, concert, art show, dramatic production, and special event that attracts visitors into our buildings. They will get prompt attention to every request for information, or interviews with any member of our staff they want to talk with. We count our city's newspapers and broadcast media among the best friends Albuquerque's children and educators have, and we don't intend to have anything we have done (or failed to do) spoil that friendship.

What about the last P—publications? Our strategy with our publications is simply this: First, write and design the publication for the audience at which it is aimed. If it is aimed at employees of the school system, try to keep it full of information which *they* are interested in, in language which appeals to *them*. If it is aimed at the lay public, try to keep it free of educational gobbledygook, and write it in laymen's terms. Try to follow the simple rules of good design and typography. And lastly, in Albuquerque we steal every good idea we can spot in the hundreds of publications which we exchange with other educators

around the nation, and we're flattered when we find they have stolen something from us.

THE FIVE P'S— IN A CAMPAIGN

In order to illustrate how all five P's fit together into a strategic, planned dissemination program, let me discuss one of the Albuquerque Public Schools' entire bond issue campaigns.

The planning for the 1966 bond issue election began almost as soon as the 1965 election was over, because one of the first things we do is analyze the election results on a district-by-district basis with previous year's returns to see if there are any trends developing in the public's acceptance of bond debt questions.

By the time of our annual preschool conference in late August of 1965, we had already set a tentative date for the 1966 election and were able to announce to staff members that we could expect to have a bond election on March 1.

At the same time, we were able to inform PTA units that there would be a special visual presentation available to them between February 1 and March 1, so that their program chairmen (who plan programs in September for the whole year) would include it in their planning.

The superintendent's annual report, issued in September, took note of the fact that the district still had many unmet building needs and that citizens would be called upon during the 1965-66 school year to vote additional bond funds. This annual report is made available to employees and is also mailed to community leaders and the press.

Between September and December, the appropriate staff members gathered data about our system's building needs: enrollment trend projections, class sizes, unmet building needs carried over from the previous year, etc. In December, at a public meeting of the board of education, these building needs were fully explained to the board, to the press, and to interested citizens. They were given full treatment in our weekly *Staff Newsletter* for employees, in the daily newspapers and over television, and in the January issue of our Albuquerque Public Schools *Journal,* which is mailed to community leaders and distributed to all employees.

Reacting to these explained needs, the board in January formally called for a bond election on March 1. Again, this board action received full coverage in all of the printed channels and through the press.

Later in January, having carefully assessed specific needs and assigned priorities to the most pressing, and having determined how many projects could be built from the bond issue amount, the administrative staff presented the board with the recommended list of projects to be constructed if the public approved the issue. Again, there was full reporting in all available media.

At the same time as the priority list was being developed, the man responsible for developing our visual program—promised to our staff and to PTA program chairmen back in September—was putting together a narrated slide program. Others were engaged in selecting a team of resource people who would take the visual program out into the community. These people were selected on the basis of their speaking ability, their knowledge of the school system as a whole, their ability to field tough questions intelligently and calmly, and their willingness to donate one or two nights a week for four successive weeks.

About the first of February, the visual program was premiered for an invited audience. It included members of the board of education, the administrative staff of the school system, the 12 resource people responsible for taking it to the community, and members of the press. The group offered suggestions for changes and improvements in the presentation.

One person was responsible for receiving bookings of the program, which had been advertised in all of our publications and in the news media, and for assigning members of the resource team to cover the requests. The program was shown to nearly 100 community groups, including school faculties, PTA chapters, civic and service clubs, church groups, and the executive committee of the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce (which publicly endorsed the issue immediately after seeing the presentation). At each showing, there was ample opportunity for questions about the school system's building needs and the bond issue. Members of the resource team kept in close touch throughout February, keeping one another posted on the kinds of questions and reactions. Since this is as close as we can come to face-to-face communication with large numbers of community leaders, and is our opportunity to get two-way communication with them, we make maximum use of the opportunity.

The entire issue of the February *Journal* was devoted to the bond election, including a complete listing of the projects to be financed, complete data on the effect the bond issue would have on property taxes, and all of the information related to the election itself—polling places, times, method of balloting, etc. The *Staff Newsletter* carried a series of articles related to the election.

On election eve, more than 30,000 two-page leaflets (actually reprints of the first two pages of the *Journal*) were carried home by the youngest elementary student in each family. The news media provided full reminder stories about the election, and gave editorial support to approval of the bond issue.

Finally, and perhaps most important, many of our schools planned open house activities for election day. In analyzing our publics, we have found that our primary target in the bond issue campaign needs

to be the potential "yes" voter who is apathetic about going to the polls. Our analysis of the previous election returns from a 16-year period has indicated that the number of "no" votes remains almost identical, precinct by precinct, year after year. The big fluctuation in our bond election returns has come in the "yes" votes. We also know that our potential "yes" voter is the parent of children in school. Open house programs—science fairs, spaghetti suppers, art shows, classroom visitations—bring these parents into the school building. We just happen to locate the polling places where they will have to walk right by them on the way to the school activity. This little strategy has a tremendous effect upon election returns.

This concludes a rather detailed description of how one organization —the Albuquerque Public Schools, with the help of other organizations such as the classroom teachers association and the PTA—plans a dissemination campaign and tries to bring to bear all of the communication tools available.

The three Q's I mentioned earlier were: questions, quickness, and quality.

I have read that the last conversation held by Gertrude Stein, as she was dying, went something like this: She was asked by Alice Toklas, "Gertrude, what's the answer?" The response was, "What is the question?" Much the same thing has been said by some of our nation's leading scientists. Finding answers is no problem, they say. The trick to progress is knowing enough to ask the right questions.

Questions must be part of a dissemination program if it is to have any hope of success. William T. Jerome has posed three questions for continuous concern to anyone who is involved in public relations planning. The questions are: "What are we trying to do?" "How well are we doing?" and "How can we do better?" Continuous evaluation of this kind is an essential part of PR strategy.

Questions also should be used to trigger two-way communication. How much better off we might all be if we used more of our communications tools to ask questions, rather than give answers.

The second Q—quickness—simply means: Treat all communications as urgent. Try to get there first with the most, which is a good way to keep rumors and unfair criticism from occurring.

The last Q is quality, and it should speak for itself. The dissemination program should have as high a quality as you can give it, in terms of the manpower you can get for it, and in terms of the planning and strategy which go into it.

One last admonition, especially to those who may not have an organized dissemination program as yet, or who suspect that the present program may still be a little primitive. Don't delay; and just get some of those floating bottles out of the way.

WHO REALLY DECIDES THE PR PROGRAM?

The superintendent's public relations philosophy may soon be on trial in many school districts. What he believes about PR, as well as the kind of PR program (or lack of one) he has advocated, will become a matter of analysis and discussion. The pressures for this exposure come from many different directions. They stem from experiences in school integration, financing difficulties, employee group negotiations and—most significantly—the increasing sophistication of school board members.

There will be a rubbing off of criticism of industrial managers who have been content to equate public relations with publicity clippings. In a recent poll of major corporations, 77 percent of the managers said they measured the effectiveness of their PR programs by clippings. "It wasn't a shortage of clippings that brought the automobile industry the kind of legislation it most feared," snorted PR columnist L. L. L. Golden in *Saturday Review*. "The country is in the midst of immense change," he observed. "Public discontent is deep. All our institutions are affected, and business is facing a future full of hazards that rooms full of laudatory newspaper clippings and magazine stories will not remove."

Being challenged also is a widely held belief among superintendents that public confidence and support of school systems are based upon

evidences of pride and progress—that the public wants to back a winner.

"A sensible school PR program will give as much attention to its deficiencies as it does to its achievements," declared a full-page letter in *School Boards,* published by the National School Boards Association. "Public confidence in the system will be strongest when educational leaders are known to be aware of the deficiencies and determined to correct them," wrote Charles B. Saunders Jr., Montgomery County, Maryland, board member.

"Not only does the propagandistic approach affront the intelligence of the informed citizen, but also it fails to make any impression on the uninformed citizens who have little interest in school problems (and who make up the bulk of the voting population).

"When it comes time for the superintendent to propose budget increases, the greatest resistance is sure to come from the community that has been lulled with happy 'messages.' The taxpayers will rightly ask: 'If the schools are already so good, why do they need so much money?' "

A big drive was launched to emphasize the role of school board members in public relations by the New Jersey State Federation of District Boards of Education. This resulted from a public opinion poll made by the group in New Jersey two years ago. It revealed a tremendous citizen "knowledge gap" about how schools are financed and operated. For instance, nearly 40 percent of those interviewed either didn't know or were misinformed as to whether their local school board was elected or appointed.

Now being circulated to New Jersey board members is a 36-page *PR Primer* which is rather pointed. Example: "Many boards operate without written policies in PR. Administrators are left to do whatever they think necessary to inform the public about the schools . . . many like it this way. Such programs are usually limited both in effort and in effect, and are certainly not well understood by members of the staff. Such programs, if they can be called that, are really visible only in a time of crisis . . . their effects then are apt to be more detrimental than helpful."

Another public relations tool by the New Jersey board group is *The School Board and YOU,* a 63-frame slide-film which explains the fundamentals of school operations. Other PR audiovisual aids are in production.

DON'T IGNORE COMMUNITY NEWCOMERS

Many school districts shamefully are turning their backs upon potentially strong support by failing to take the initiative in contacting new residents. High population mobility these days creates this opportunity in large numbers of communities. In some changing communities, attitudes of new residents toward schools can soon have tremendous impact.

At Alhambra, California, the city and high school districts have launched a systematic procedure which promises to assure a continuing method for reaching larger numbers of newcomers. A 16-page booklet has been prepared which extends a welcome from the school board and provides basic information about the districts needed by new arrivals. Chambers of commerce in two communities served by the schools supply names and addresses of new residents each month and the booklet is mailed by the school district. In another part of the community, a community hostess service presents copies of the booklet to newcomers and briefs them on the school district. More than 200 new families are contacted monthly.

Copies of special reports dealing with projected elementary and secondary enrollments together with construction plans for buildings of the Downers Grove Schools, Downers Grove, Illinois, are well received by prospective new residents. All real estate agents in the area have been given a supply of copies.

When a school district was annexed to the Tacoma, Washington, schools, parents of all children in the area received a "Welcome, Reston" bulletin from Superintendent Angelo Giaudrone which gave facts about basic school services and policies. The copy was adapted from material regularly sent to new dis-

trict residents via Welcome Wagon and newcomer organizations.

All Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, real estate brokers were invited to attend a special half-day briefing by Superintendent Donald E. Langlois to learn about policies of special interest to new residents, transportation and other services, finance data, etc. The special presentation by the administrative staff was followed by a tour of the newest building in the system and a luncheon prepared by high school home economics students. Such a favorable reaction was received that the program was adapted for a "senior citizens day." Oldsters were so fascinated they stayed for the entire day looking over the high school. Later, each senior citizen who had attended was mailed a lifetime pass to all school functions.

At fast-growing Simi, California, a seven-item kit is presented to each new family which contacts the administrative office. It includes:

1. Directory of public services, which gives names of agencies and phone numbers to contact regarding both school and nonschool problems, ranging from adult education and animals to unsafe roads and water problems.

2. Directory of schools and letter of welcome.

3. School calendar.

4. Booklet describing board of education meeting procedures with calendar of meeting dates.

5. Student behavior policy booklet.

6. Map of district showing attendance area boundaries.

7. Copy of *School Days,* the district newsletter.

SLIDE-FILMS AND FILMSTRIPS

Once upon a time the color filmstrip or set of slides with recorded commentary was one of the glamour tools of school public relations. It was used sparingly, usually, because of special unbudgeted costs involved for art work, lettering, photography, and recording. Even though it is now technically possible for almost anyone to produce such an audiovisual message, thanks to easy-to-use color cameras and tape recorders, the expansion of use in school PR work has been comparatively modest.

The first major PR use of the sound-slide story was for presenting information and winning support in school finance campaigns. Many of the school districts which first used such a presentation in a campaign more than a decade ago today regard this kind of communication to be a campaign fixture. Many smaller districts have followed suit.

Sound-picture presentations have also been developed for teacher recruitment, orientation of parents of beginning pupils, membership and legislative program promotion in teacher organizations, dissemination of information about innovations and particularly as part of Title I and Title III projects of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

One shortcoming of the slide-film presentation is that, from a mechanical standpoint, it is too easy to make. As a result, audiences across the country are being subjected to scores of slide-film productions by educators which violate good communications standards. Many years of TV viewing have given almost every adult in this country ingrained quality expectancies regarding visual and audio material. Substandard technical work immediately calls attention to itself

and raises doubts about the validity of the communication.

Here are kinds of difficulties frequently encountered when know-how is lacking:

SCRIPT—Sometimes it's really a non-script, a lecture for which illustrations are incidentals. It may be written after pictures are accumulated rather than serving as a blueprint. Lack of timing concept, calling for too few illustrations for length of audio, with result that audience attention is lost because of visual boredom. Commentary is cold and impersonal or gushy.

ILLUSTRATIONS—Static photos which seem "posed" and do not help tell the story. Lots of photos of committees and groups. No close-ups. Complicated charts. Too many words. Lettering too small. Obviously substandard illustrations and lettering.

SOUND—Inferior voice quality or sloppy delivery. Poor recording conditions.

Extra audience interest was created in a Baltimore, Maryland, County Schools filmstrip made to explain a bond issue by linking the development of the school system to the history and economic development of the area. The staff information specialist said the filmstrip was decided upon because it was important that the same story be presented to 137 PTA groups, plus civic and service clubs. In previous years, he said, it was astounding the way alterations in subject matter developed when the presentations were made by 50 different speakers before 50 different audiences.

The PTA footed the bill for 20 copies of the filmstrip plus tapes for the narration. The total cost was $200, of which $50 went to a free-lance artist for charts and titles. A staff photographer took the color pictures. The filmstrip format assured that individual pictures could not get out of place or lost. Most clubs were willing to allow 20 minutes of meeting time for the presentation. The bond issue passed 3-1. The filmstrip continues to have use in social studies classes for its historical content.

COMMUNICATION GUIDE

The books, special reports, articles, and periodicals listed below have been selected for their reference value to individuals who are regularly confronted with responsibilities for school public relations. The selection is intended to be representative of recent significant literature in the field of communication.

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